

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge the indication that claim 14 contains allowable subject matter. Claims 1-19 are pending. Claims 1-10, 13, 15, 16, and 18 have been canceled. Claims 11, 17, and 19 have been amended. New claims 20-26 have been added. No new matter has been added by way of this amendment. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-5, 8, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, and 19 stand objected to based on certain informalities. Based on the cancellation of claims 1-10, 13, 15, 16, and 18 the objection to these claims is now moot.

With respect to claim 19, the Examiner has stated that “a sheet” should be positively recited. In response to this objection, Applicants have amended claim 19 as required. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the claims are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 5-7, and 15-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by EPA 0 923 902 (EPA ‘902). Claims 1-4, 6, 8-13, and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 823,725 to *Hayden*, while claim 19 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the same reference in view of EPA ‘902. In response to these several grounds of rejections, Applicants have amended independent claim 11 to more clearly define those features of the invention which distinguish it from the cited references. Accordingly, for the reasons set forth hereafter, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims of record now distinguish over the cited references.

Claim 11 includes the limitation “two sheets are overlaid in a face-to-face relationship with each other at two joining portions, defining a holding space between confronting faces of said two sheets, and said two fiber bundle layers are disposed on cleaning faces of said two sheets opposite further said confronting faces and joined to said two sheets at said two joining portions.

U.S. Patent No. 823,725 to *Hayden* discloses a dusting device suitable for moving dust from furniture, base-boards, and the like (see col. 1, lines 8-10).

said base sheet opposite from the cleaning-face, said holding space being located above said fiber bundle layer and said cleaning-side sheet in a thickness direction of the article.”

With this claimed construction, the fiber bundle layer can be firmly pressed against an object to be cleaned, such as the floor and/or furniture, because the user’s hand or the holder when inserted into the holding space is positioned above the fiber bundle layer in the thickness direction of the article.

On the other hand, the *Hayden* reference discloses a cleaning article in which a stack of the base sheet (felt d) and the fiber bundle layer (fiber layer f) is disposed between the cleaning-side sheet (one sheet c) and the holding sheet (the other sheet c). In this cleaning article, however, the holding space is not formed between the base sheet and the holding sheet. Rather, the holding space is formed between the cleaning-side sheet and the holding sheet (c, c). Furthermore, the holding space is not located above the fiber bundle layer in a thickness direction of the article. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully assert that newly added independent claim 20 is also patentable over the Hayden reference, and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

In view of the patentability of amended independent claim 11 and new claim 20, for the foregoing reasons, dependent claims 12, 14, 17, and 19, as well as new claims 21-26 are also patentable over the cited references.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application should be in condition for allowance. Early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested. However, if there are any questions regarding this Response, or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this would expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

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Respectfully submitted,

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